

My personal feeling—and it may only be mine; maybe a few others share it—is that when it comes to campaign financing, we need to do something dramatic, something that States have already proven can make a significant difference. I am talking about public financing. I didn't come to this idea quickly. In fact, I didn't like the idea when I was first elected. I thought it was unconscionable that somehow we would create a system of public financing that would finance some of the strange and extreme candidates who appear from time to time. But I have come to realize that unless and until we make a significant change in the way we finance campaigns, we are not going to restore the integrity of this institution and others. We are not going to restore the confidence of the American people.

It is dangerous to walk the streets around the Capitol because of all the traffic, all the visitors. It is even more dangerous during the course of the day as Members of the House and Senate race to their party headquarter buildings to make fundraising telephone calls, which we have to do; it is the only way to raise the funds so that people of modest means have a chance to compete in the campaign arena. It takes more and more of our time and more time away from what we should be doing on the floors of our respective Chambers. Public financing is an appropriate way to address that. If we did it on a comprehensive basis, we could have genuine reform.

Senator REID of Nevada has said that is a worthy goal, campaign finance reform, but let's do it the right way, not have something parachuted into the conference committee by House Republicans as a poison pill to real ethics reform. I will do everything I can to defeat what is so-called ethics reform out of the House that does little or nothing to clean up our act on Capitol Hill and tries to inject a clearly political issue into this debate. We need to pass the kind of reform that will restore confidence. Complicating it with campaign finance reform is not the way to do it at this moment.

Let's do it the right way. Let's have hearings, deadlines. Let's create a bill. I would like to join with other Senators, perhaps from both sides of the aisle, to make sure public financing is part of the debate.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, some housekeeping items have been cleared on both sides.

AMENDMENT NOS. 3618, 3619, 3714, AND 3716,  
WITHDRAWN

I ask unanimous consent to withdraw amendment No. 3618, the subject of which was addressed by division II of Coburn amendment No. 3641.

I also ask unanimous consent to withdraw amendments numbered 3619, 3714, and 3716.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

AMENDMENT NO. 3855

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is the second-degree amendment of the Senator from Delaware to his first-degree amendment.

Mr. COCHRAN. I think we are ready to proceed to agree to that on a voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate on that amendment, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 3855) was agreed to.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mrs. MURRAY. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is now on agreeing to the underlying amendment, as amended.

The amendment (No. 3717), as amended, was agreed to.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mrs. MURRAY. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, we continue to make good progress. We hope to complete action either this evening or tomorrow on the bill. It could be, in consultation with the leader, possible to complete action on the bill today and have a vote on final passage tomorrow if we are going to go a little late this evening, but we don't anticipate a late evening. We hope to be able to adjourn at a reasonable hour. With the cooperation of Senators, we can do that.

We have cloture, which has been invoked, which limits amendments for consideration to germane amendments. We have entered into colloquies and we think some of these amendments are going to be withdrawn. We hope if Senators have an intention of disposing of their amendments, if they want a vote, now is a good time to come to the floor and make that request known. We can dispose of those amendments.

We urge the cooperation of Senators, and if we get to some point, we may offer amendments for Senators, if they are in order and pending and have not yet been called up. As a matter of notice, we intend to press ahead and complete action on the bill within a reasonable time. And we will, with the cooperation of all Senators.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I will take just a moment of the Senate's time to thank a few people who worked hard to put together a colloquy. This is a very important conversation between three Senators that deals with the critical issue of the health of our soldiers who are coming back from combat. So I will read this for the RECORD.

This colloquy is about a Comprehensive Casualty Care Center at the San Diego Naval Medical Center, and this is the colloquy. It starts off with myself saying:

I would like to thank the Senator from Alaska and the Senator from Hawaii for their outstanding leadership on this bill and especially for their commitment to providing care for our Nation's combat-wounded servicemembers.

I understand that I have a commitment from both Senators that they will work to ensure that \$6.2 million in funding is included in this bill for the establishment of a Comprehensive Combat Casualty Care Center at the San Diego Naval Medical Center.

This vitally important funding will ensure that for the first time, combat-wounded servicemembers from the West Coast—who have endured approximately 25 percent of all casualties—will be able to receive treatment and recover from their wounds closer to their home.

Since many of the most severely wounded require months of treatment and rehabilitation, this will alleviate significant hardship on our servicemembers and their families. No longer will they have to travel to Texas or to the East Coast for treatment.

This "West Coast Walter Reed" will be able to treat approximately 200 patients per year, including 160 nonamputee patients and 40 to 50 amputee patients. While I lament that even one more servicemember will be wounded in combat, I look forward to opening the center and to working with the Navy to ensure that our servicemembers are afforded the very best possible medical care.

That concludes my portion of this colloquy. I have been working with the Navy on this matter since they explained to us that so many of our west coast families have to be trekked all the way to the east coast for rehabilitation for these very severe injuries. The rehab is very intensive, and the whole family really needs to be included and involved in it. So now it is going to be so much easier for these active military from the State of Washington, from the State of Oregon, and I believe from Alaska, Hawaii, and even some other States such as Nevada that are east of California, to be able to avail themselves of the best treatment. I believe the Navy has been so focused on this that their dreams are becoming a reality. They are going to serve the military from all the various branches who get injured. It isn't just for the